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3 March 1958

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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3 March 1958

DAILY BRIEF

25X1D

I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

no

II. ASIA-AFRICA

no

25X6

no

Yemen joins UAR: Yemen's attachment to Nasir's United Arab Republic was effected on 2 March despite efforts by Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Iraq to discourage such action. Under the loose confederation envisaged, Egyptian influence will almost certainly be increased in

Yemen, despite the Iman's retention of a veto over the resident advisory "federal council" and his command over any Egyptian or Syrian troops which may be sent to Yemen. [redacted]

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OK
Tunisian situation: The Bourguiba government is trying to arouse world opinion against French plans to seal the Algerian-Tunisian border by evacuating local populations and creating a large "no man's land" on the Algerian side. Although French Minister for Algeria Lacoste has issued a communiqué denying that measures to create such a zone have been started, Tunisia claims to be flooded with Algerian refugees and to have discovered French land mines on Tunisian territory. [redacted]

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GR
Indonesia: Lt. Col. Barlian in South Sumatra, who has claimed to be neutral since the 15 February declaration of a rival government in Central Sumatra, now appears to be taking action more favorable to the dissidents. The geographic location of Barlian's command and the oil refineries within his territory make his attitude highly important both to the dissidents and to the Djakarta government. [redacted]

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III. THE WEST

OK

Greek Government: Following the resignation of Prime Minister Karamanlis on 2 March, the political initiative rests in the hands of King Paul. Although the King has previously indicated that he would call national elections if Karamanlis were forced out, he is now under considerable pressure to select another conservative prime minister and to postpone elections for several months. Whatever the king decides, political instability in Athens appears likely to continue for at least several weeks.

25X1A [redacted]

3 Mar 58

DAILY BRIEF

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France - De Gaulle rumors: The uncertain outlook for the Gaillard government and France's deteriorating position in North Africa are reviving parliamentary and public references to the desirability and imminence of General de Gaulle's return to power. There is still no evidence, however, of any widespread movement favoring the general, who has repeatedly insisted that he would accept office only if he were recalled legally.

No

Venezuela: The governing junta appears to have decided to legalize the Communist party, presumably to ensure continued support by the four parties whose Patriotic Front took a leading part in the ouster of President Perez. The junta's stability will be weakened, however, if such a move is made without the tacit consent of the armed forces leaders who previously expressed their strong opposition.

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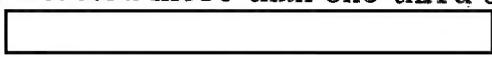
The Tunisian Situation

President Bourguiba, in a radio speech on 27 February, apparently initiated a campaign to enlist world opinion against any French attempt to seal the Algerian-Tunisian border by creating an extensive "no man's land" on the Algerian side of the border. Press reports state that Bourguiba is sending letters to numerous chiefs of state pointing out disastrous consequences of such a French policy.

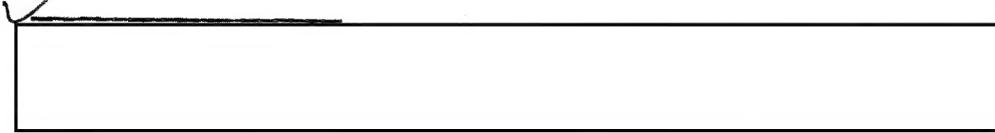
Simultaneously, Tunisia lodged a new complaint with the UN Security Council, charging that France is forcibly evicting 250,000 inhabitants from the zone and that these persons are seeking refuge in Tunisia. The French press claims that no more than 35,000 to 40,000 Algerians will be evacuated and that the frontier cities of La Calle and Ouenza will become fortresses.

Although Minister for Algeria Lacoste has issued a communiqué charging that Tunisia's complaint to the United Nations is unfounded because measures to establish a "no man's land" have not yet been initiated, Tunisia claims that 1,600 new refugees have fled to Tunisia because of France's "scorched earth" activities along the Algerian border, and that French land mines have been detected more than one third of a mile inside Tunisia.

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South Sumatran Commander Leans Further
Toward Rebels

Lt. Col. Barlian in South Sumatra, who has claimed to be neutral despite his obvious sympathy for the rebels, now appears to be leaning even further toward the dissident government. Barlian has captured an undisclosed number of irregular troops which had infiltrated Central and South Sumatra, presumably on government orders, to undermine rebel leader Hussein in Central Sumatra and keep Barlian neutral. Apparently as a warning to Djakarta against meddling in the area, the South Sumatran radio announced on 1 March that all of Barlian's troops had pledged their support to him.

Reports from Java on troop movements in preparation for an operation against dissident areas now include mention of reactivated student veterans. These groups are frequently infiltrated or controlled by leftists, and, if armed by the government, would increase Communist strength within the Indonesian Army.

With rebel radios back in operation after being bombed out on 22 February, the propaganda warfare with Djakarta has resumed. Prime Minister Djuanda warned on 1 March that persons in Java caught listening to dissident broadcasts would be prosecuted as rebel sympathizers.

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III. THE WEST

Greek Cabinet Resigns

The resignation of Greek Prime Minister Constantine Karamanlis and his cabinet on 2 March, following loss of a parliamentary majority when 15 deputies withdrew their support, has placed the initiative for future political action in the hands of King Paul. The 15 deputies have formed a new political party under Panagiotis Papaligouras, one of two cabinet ministers who resigned on 27 February after a dispute with the prime minister regarding a new electoral law.

When submitting his resignation, Karamanlis suggested that the King dissolve parliament and call for new national elections. His actions in promoting a split within his cabinet and then resigning may have been undertaken in the hope that new elections would strengthen his position. However, many Greek politicians including the leaders of the Liberals, second largest party in Greece, are firmly opposed to elections at this time and are pressing the King to appoint another conservative prime minister to head an interim government. If elections are called immediately, they will be held under the present electoral law which favors Karamanlis' National Radical Union but also makes probable an electoral coalition of center and leftist parties, as happened in 1956.

Elections at this time would give Communist sympathizers and others an opportunity to exploit popular feeling connected with the Cyprus issue and the possible location of American missile bases in Greece. Failure to hold immediate elections, however, would probably lead to a long period of political instability in Greece, with the result that government initiative in the fields of domestic and foreign policy would be seriously inhibited.

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References to General de Gaulle's Return to Power in France

France's deteriorating position in North Africa and the uncertain outlook for the Gaillard government are reviving public and parliamentary references to the desirability and imminence of General de Gaulle's return to political power. The American Embassy in Paris notes that, while there is still no evidence of any mass movement on behalf of the general, rumors of Gaillard's imminent fall have led various members of parliament, ranging from Socialists to Independents, to predict privately that De Gaulle will take over. The Gaullist-oriented Social Republican party has issued another public appeal for his recall, and recent invocation of his name by a rightist and a neutralist senator drew scattered applause from both left and right benches in the Council of the Republic.

De Gaulle, now 67, has repeatedly indicated that he would take power only if recalled legally, presumably by the President of the republic with acquiescence of the National Assembly. He would immediately dismiss or limit the assembly for a two- or three-year period while a new constitution would be devised to provide a stronger executive. There is, however, little likelihood that the assembly would relinquish its prerogatives without a drastic upheaval in France. Although many rightists believe his views on North Africa coincide with theirs, there are reliable reports that he would advocate a liberal Algerian settlement and establishment of a free association of France and the North African states under the symbolic leadership of France.

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Venezuelan Junta May Legalize Communist Party

A decision by the Venezuelan governing junta on the status of the Communist party (PCV) could upset the surface unity which has prevailed among the country's disparate political and military groups since late January. Although armed forces leaders have strongly protested legalization of the Communist party, prominent leaders of the three major non-Communist parties seem to favor such a step, and junta president Larrazabal recently indicated to the American chargé in Caracas that the government may go along with this view. The 9,000-member PCV gained considerable prestige as an element of the four-party Patriotic Front which played an important part in the ouster of dictator Perez, and it has since become increasingly active in labor and politics.

The junta probably has maintained its stability thus far because the political parties and the military have been preoccupied with organizational problems and maneuvering for position. The armed forces are divided into hostile or suspicious factions, and the leaders of the non-Communist parties seem to hold conflicting views on their announced political truce, on methods for restoring constitutional government, and on the role of the Patriotic Front, which has emerged as a powerful political instrumentality in its own right.

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